

Appl. No. 09/885,914

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-20. (Canceled).

21. (New) A method of treating inflammatory and/or erosive aspects of arthritis in a mammal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a proprotein convertase inhibitor to said mammal.

22. (New) The method according to claim 21, wherein the proprotein convertase inhibitor is selected from the group consisting of PDX, a derivative of PDX, Dec-RVKR-CH₂Cl, and any combination thereof.

23. (New) The method according to claim 22, wherein the PDX or derivative of PDX is administered in the form of a viral vector comprising an expression control sequence operatively linked to a nucleic acid sequence encoding the PDX or derivative of PDX, and the PDX or derivative of PDX is expressed in an amount sufficient to inhibit the proprotein convertase.

24. (New) A method of treating inflammatory and/or erosive aspects of arthritis in a mammal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a proprotein convertase inhibitor to said mammal to block proprotein convertase-mediated endoproteolytic activation of a mature form of one or more proteins selected from the group consisting of TGF β 1, PDGF, TACE, MMP-2 and aggrecanase-1.

25. (New) The method according to claim 24, wherein the proprotein convertase inhibitor is selected from the group consisting of PDX, a derivative of PDX, Dec-RVKR-CH₂Cl, and any combination thereof.

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26. (New) The method according to claim 25, wherein the PDX or derivative of PDX is administered in the form of a viral vector comprising an expression control sequence operatively linked to a nucleic acid sequence encoding the PDX or derivative of PDX, and the PDX or derivative of PDX is expressed in an amount sufficient to inhibit the proprotein convertase.

27. (New) The method according to claim 25, wherein the protein is TGF β 1.

28. (New) The method according to claim 25, wherein the protein is PDGF.

29. (New) The method according to claim 25, wherein the protein is TACE.

30. (New) The method according to claim 25, wherein the protein is MMP-2.

31. (New) The method according to claim 25, wherein the protein is aggrecanase-1.

32. (New) A method of inhibiting synovial cell growth in a mammal comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a proprotein convertase inhibitor to said mammal.

33. (New) The method according to claim 32 wherein the proprotein convertase inhibitor is PDX or a derivative of PDX.

34. (New) The method according to claim 33, wherein the PDX or the derivative of PDX is administered in the form of a viral vector comprising an expression control sequence operatively linked to a nucleic acid sequence encoding a PDX or a derivative thereof, and the PDX is expressed in an amount sufficient to inhibit synovial cell growth.

35. (New) A method of blocking proprotein convertase-mediated endoproteolytic activation of a mature form of a protein in a synovial cell comprising administering a proprotein convertase inhibitor to said cell.

36. (New) The method according to claim 35, wherein the proprotein convertase inhibitor is selected from the group consisting of PDX, a derivative of PDX, Dec-RVKR-CH₂Cl, and any combination thereof.

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37. (New) The method according to claim 36, wherein the PDX or the derivative of PDX is administered in the form of a viral vector comprising an expression control sequence operatively linked to a nucleic acid sequence encoding a PDX or a derivative thereof, and the PDX is expressed in an amount sufficient to block proprotein convertase-mediated endoproteolytic activation.

38. (New) The method according to claim 35, wherein said protein is selected from the group consisting of TGF β 1, PDGF, TACE, MMP-2, aggrecanase-1 and any combination thereof.

39. (New) The method according to claim 38, wherein the proprotein convertase inhibitor is selected from the group consisting of PDX, a derivative of PDX, Dec-RVKR-CH₂Cl, and any combination thereof.

40. (New) The method according to claim 39, wherein the PDX or the derivative of PDX is administered in the form of a viral vector comprising an expression control sequence operatively linked to a nucleic acid sequence encoding a PDX or a derivative thereof, and the PDX is expressed in an amount sufficient to block proprotein convertase-mediated endoproteolytic activation.